

CATFISH PROCESSING



**USDA/NASS
ARKANSAS
FIELD OFFICE**

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**USDA/NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS SERVICE**

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Released February 21, 2006, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture. For information on *Catfish Processing* call Mike Barker at 202-720-3243, office hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET.

Catfish Processing Down 8 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during January 2006 totaled 49.7 million pounds round weight, down 8 percent from January 2005. The average price paid to producers was 72.6 cents per pound for January 2006, unchanged from last month but 0.1 cent above a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during January 2006 totaled 26.9 million pounds, up 3 percent from the comparable month in 2005. Total end of the month inventory decreased 2 percent from last month and was down 9 percent from January last year. Sales of fresh fish, at 9.48 million pounds, were down 2 percent from January 2005 and represented 35 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 17.4 million pounds, were up 5 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 65 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 16 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 61 percent, and the remaining 23 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products.

The January 2006 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.27 per pound, down 1 cent from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.53 per pound, down 11 cents from last year. Prices for fresh fillets were up 5 cents at \$2.86 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.27 per pound, down 2 cents from January 2005. Prices for frozen whole fish were up 3 cents at \$2.00 and frozen fillets at \$2.67 per pound were up 1 cent from a year ago.

Freshwater imports of frozen, boneless, *Ictalurus*, *Pangasius* and *Siluriformes* catfish fillets for December 2005 totaled 3.24 million pounds, substantially above last year. Forty-four percent of all imports were from Vietnam with the remainder coming from Cambodia, China, China-Taipei, Malaysia and Thailand. The *Ictalurus* (channel catfish) imports totaled 461 thousand pounds.

Exports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets reported for December 2005 totaled 44.0 thousand pounds. Of the frozen fillets, 24.6 thousand pounds went to Canada and the remainder to the Bahamas and Japan. Fresh fillet exports totaled 66.6 thousand pounds, with 35.7 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest to Argentina, Mexico and Nigeria.

Import and export data are compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Census.

2005 Catfish Processing Down 5 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during 2005 totaled 601 million pounds, 5 percent below the 630 million pounds processed in 2004. The average price paid to producers in 2005 was 72.5 cents per pound, 4 percent above the 69.7 cents paid last year.

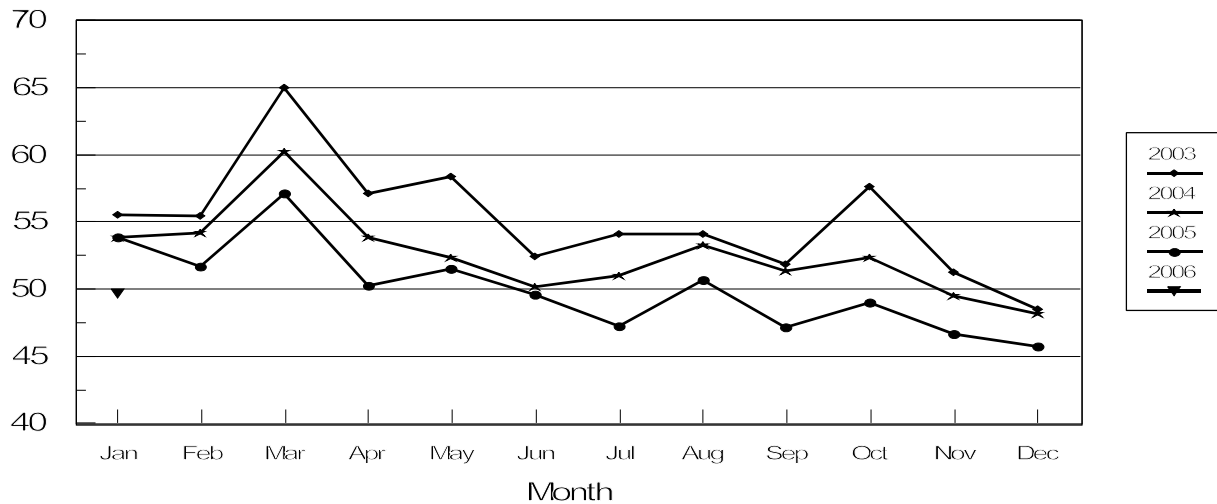
Net pounds of processed fish sold in 2005 totaled 300 million pounds, down 2 percent from the 307 million pounds sold last year.

The 2005 average price received for processed fish was \$2.29 per pound, up 3 percent from \$2.23 a year ago.

Inventory on hand at the end of 2005 totaled 13.7 million pounds, a decrease of 10 percent from the 15.2 million pounds on hand at the close of 2004.

Catfish Processed
United States 2003-2006

Million Pounds



**Farm-Raised Catfish: Quantity Processed by Major Processors,
United States, 2005-2006**

Month	Round Weight Processed					Percent of Previous Year
	Monthly		Percent of Previous Year	Cumulative		
	2005	2006		2005	2006	
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Jan	53,856	49,666	92	53,856	49,666	92
Feb	51,720			105,576		
Mar	57,117			162,693		
Apr	50,306			212,999		
May	51,552			264,551		
Jun	49,626			314,177		
Jul	47,241			361,418		
Aug	50,686			412,104		
Sep	47,151			459,255		
Oct	49,034			508,289		
Nov	46,674			554,963		
Dec	45,707			600,670		

**Farm-Raised Catfish: Prices Paid to Producers by Processors
and Imports, United States, 2005-2006**

Month	Price per Pound ¹		Change from Previous Year	Imports ²		Percent of Previous Year
	2005	2006		2004	2005	
	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Jan	0.725	0.726	0.001	215	1,383	643
Feb	0.731			204	1,230	603
Mar	0.733			295	1,161	394
Apr	0.725			328	2,198	670
May	0.722			248	2,695	1,087
Jun	0.721			270	2,538	940
Jul	0.723			123	2,048	1,665
Aug	0.724			1,637	2,684	164
Sep	0.724			1,801	2,219	123
Oct	0.724			1,104	4,062	368
Nov	0.724			1,579	4,648	294
Dec	0.726			1,420	3,239	228

¹ Price for fish delivered to the processing plant door. Price includes charges for any services provided by the processing plant, such as seining and hauling, but does not include adjustments based on year-end settlements.

² Pounds of frozen boneless fillets. Includes Ictalurus, Pangasius and Siluriformes catfish. Data furnished by U.S. Bureau of Census.

**Catfish Processors: Sales Volume, Average Price, and Ending
Inventory, United States, January 2005-2006**

Item	Sales Volume		Average Price		Ending Inventory	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>
Fresh Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	1,155	1,512	1.25	1.14	*	*
Whole Dressed	1,956	1,683	1.83	1.83	*	*
Total	3,111	3,195	1.64	1.53	211	226
Other						
Steaks	104	90	2.12	2.14	*	*
Nuggets	948	848	1.27	1.26	117	158
Other ¹	248	188	3.02	3.09	*	*
Total	1,300	1,126	1.67	1.64	137	174
Fillets ²	5,274	5,160	2.81	2.86	513	622
Total Fresh	9,685	9,481	2.28	2.27	861	1,022
Frozen Fish						
Whole Dressed	1,116	1,154	1.97	2.00	724	964
Other						
Steaks	194	121	1.71	2.04	73	104
Nuggets	3,209	3,398	1.00	0.91	1,653	1,523
Other ¹	1,382	1,497	2.80	2.58	966	1,316
Total	4,785	5,016	1.55	1.44	2,692	2,943
Fillets ²	10,618	11,238	2.66	2.67	10,368	8,452
Total Frozen	16,519	17,408	2.29	2.27	13,784	12,359
Fresh & Frozen Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	1,155	1,512	1.25	1.14	*	*
Whole Dressed	3,072	2,837	1.88	1.90	*	*
Total	4,227	4,349	1.73	1.65	935	1,190
Other						
Steaks	298	211	1.85	2.08	*	*
Nuggets	4,157	4,246	1.06	0.98	1,770	1,681
Other ¹	1,630	1,685	2.83	2.64	*	*
Total	6,085	6,142	1.57	1.47	2,829	3,117
Fillets ²	15,892	16,398	2.71	2.73	10,881	9,074
Total Fresh & Frozen	26,204	26,889	2.29	2.27	14,645	13,381

* Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

¹ Includes all products not already reported including weight of breading and added ingredients.

² Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

**Catfish Processors: Fresh and Frozen Pounds Sold
by Month, United States, 2005**

Month	Whole Fish			Other				Fillets ²	Total Sales
	Rnd & Gutted Only	Whole Dressed	Total	Steaks	Nuggets	Other ¹	Total		
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>
Fresh									
Jan	1,155	1,956	3,111	104	948	248	1,300	5,274	9,685
Feb	1,267	1,910	3,177	97	961	237	1,295	5,615	10,087
Mar	1,570	1,832	3,402	103	973	294	1,370	5,795	10,567
Apr	1,404	1,534	2,938	106	915	250	1,271	4,979	9,188
May	1,246	1,433	2,679	98	832	274	1,204	5,274	9,157
Jun	1,291	1,474	2,765	95	771	264	1,130	4,987	8,882
Jul	1,282	1,404	2,686	95	779	223	1,097	4,714	8,497
Aug	1,272	1,401	2,673	95	824	209	1,128	4,998	8,799
Sep	1,227	1,460	2,687	100	803	181	1,084	4,848	8,619
Oct	1,004	1,542	2,546	99	839	183	1,121	5,072	8,739
Nov	1,282	1,333	2,615	82	738	145	965	4,291	7,871
Dec	1,404	1,380	2,784	74	678	148	900	4,209	7,893
Total	15,404	18,659	34,063	1,148	10,061	2,656	13,865	60,056	107,984
Frozen									
Jan		1,116	1,116	194	3,209	1,382	4,785	10,618	16,519
Feb		1,117	1,117	108	3,068	1,677	4,853	10,469	16,439
Mar		1,166	1,166	133	3,103	1,680	4,916	10,824	16,906
Apr		1,141	1,141	126	2,621	1,036	3,783	10,424	15,348
May		1,091	1,091	98	3,167	1,325	4,590	10,926	16,607
Jun		1,008	1,008	114	3,244	1,592	4,950	10,314	16,272
Jul		1,021	1,021	106	3,048	1,494	4,648	9,563	15,232
Aug		1,017	1,017	110	3,321	1,598	5,029	10,491	16,537
Sep		967	967	119	3,084	1,422	4,625	10,438	16,030
Oct		1,068	1,068	149	3,577	1,454	5,180	10,917	17,165
Nov		1,023	1,023	100	2,670	1,445	4,215	9,759	14,997
Dec		1,012	1,012	93	2,746	1,141	3,980	8,940	13,932
Total		12,747	12,747	1,450	36,858	17,246	55,554	123,683	191,984
Fresh & Frozen									
Jan	1,155	3,072	4,227	298	4,157	1,630	6,085	15,892	26,204
Feb	1,267	3,027	4,294	205	4,029	1,914	6,148	16,084	26,526
Mar	1,570	2,998	4,568	236	4,076	1,974	6,286	16,619	27,473
Apr	1,404	2,675	4,079	232	3,536	1,286	5,054	15,403	24,536
May	1,246	2,524	3,770	196	3,999	1,599	5,794	16,200	25,764
Jun	1,291	2,482	3,773	209	4,015	1,856	6,080	15,301	25,154
Jul	1,282	2,425	3,707	201	3,827	1,717	5,745	14,277	23,729
Aug	1,272	2,418	3,690	205	4,145	1,807	6,157	15,489	25,336
Sep	1,227	2,427	3,654	219	3,887	1,603	5,709	15,286	24,649
Oct	1,004	2,610	3,614	248	4,416	1,637	6,301	15,989	25,904
Nov	1,282	2,356	3,638	182	3,408	1,590	5,180	14,050	22,868
Dec	1,404	2,392	3,796	167	3,424	1,289	4,880	13,149	21,825
Total	15,404	31,406	46,810	2,598	46,919	19,902	69,419	183,739	299,968

¹ Includes all products not already reported, including weight of breading and added ingredients.

² Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

**Catfish Processors: Fresh and Frozen Average Sales Price
by Month, United States, 2005**

Month	Whole Fish			Other				Fillets ²	Total Sales
	Rnd & Gutted Only	Whole Dressed	Total	Steaks	Nuggets	Other ¹	Total		
	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>
Fresh									
Jan	1.25	1.83	1.64	2.12	1.27	3.02	1.67	2.81	2.28
Feb	1.27	1.83	1.64	2.12	1.29	3.03	1.67	2.75	2.26
Mar	1.26	1.85	1.61	2.15	1.30	3.05	1.74	2.85	2.31
Apr	1.23	1.88	1.61	2.18	1.29	3.03	1.71	2.87	2.31
May	1.21	1.88	1.61	2.16	1.30	3.05	1.77	2.86	2.35
Jun	1.19	1.85	1.58	2.16	1.30	3.04	1.78	2.85	2.32
Jul	1.20	1.86	1.58	2.14	1.28	3.06	1.72	2.84	2.30
Aug	1.19	1.86	1.57	2.14	1.27	3.07	1.68	2.83	2.30
Sep	1.18	1.86	1.58	2.13	1.26	3.08	1.64	2.83	2.29
Oct	1.22	1.85	1.63	2.12	1.28	3.08	1.65	2.84	2.34
Nov	1.16	1.84	1.55	2.15	1.25	3.08	1.60	2.84	2.26
Dec	1.12	1.81	1.50	2.14	1.28	3.10	1.65	2.84	2.23
Avg	1.21	1.85	1.59	2.14	1.28	3.05	1.69	2.83	2.30
Frozen									
Jan		1.97	1.97	1.71	1.00	2.80	1.55	2.66	2.29
Feb		2.01	2.01	1.96	1.03	2.78	1.66	2.66	2.32
Mar		1.98	1.98	1.94	1.05	2.81	1.68	2.70	2.35
Apr		2.01	2.01	1.87	1.00	2.68	1.49	2.66	2.32
May		2.02	2.02	1.98	0.93	2.68	1.46	2.64	2.27
Jun		2.01	2.01	1.97	0.93	2.49	1.46	2.68	2.27
Jul		2.00	2.00	2.02	0.89	2.55	1.45	2.70	2.27
Aug		1.99	1.99	2.02	0.87	2.53	1.42	2.68	2.26
Sep		2.01	2.01	1.96	0.89	2.58	1.44	2.68	2.28
Oct		2.00	2.00	1.91	0.89	2.54	1.38	2.66	2.23
Nov		2.03	2.03	2.02	0.93	2.78	1.59	2.67	2.32
Dec		2.01	2.01	2.01	0.92	2.60	1.43	2.66	2.26
Avg		2.00	2.00	1.93	0.94	2.65	1.50	2.67	2.29
Fresh & Frozen									
Jan	1.25	1.88	1.73	1.85	1.06	2.83	1.57	2.71	2.29
Feb	1.27	1.90	1.74	2.04	1.09	2.81	1.66	2.69	2.30
Mar	1.26	1.90	1.71	2.03	1.11	2.85	1.69	2.75	2.34
Apr	1.23	1.94	1.72	2.01	1.08	2.75	1.54	2.73	2.32
May	1.21	1.94	1.73	2.07	1.01	2.74	1.52	2.71	2.30
Jun	1.19	1.91	1.69	2.06	1.00	2.57	1.52	2.74	2.28
Jul	1.20	1.92	1.70	2.08	0.97	2.62	1.50	2.75	2.28
Aug	1.19	1.91	1.69	2.08	0.95	2.59	1.47	2.73	2.27
Sep	1.18	1.92	1.69	2.04	0.97	2.64	1.48	2.73	2.28
Oct	1.22	1.91	1.74	1.99	0.96	2.60	1.43	2.72	2.27
Nov	1.16	1.92	1.68	2.08	1.00	2.81	1.59	2.72	2.30
Dec	1.12	1.89	1.63	2.07	0.99	2.66	1.47	2.72	2.25
Avg	1.21	1.91	1.71	2.02	1.02	2.71	1.54	2.72	2.29

¹ Includes all products not already reported, including weight of breading and added ingredients.

² Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

**Catfish Processors: Fresh and Frozen End-of-Month Inventory
by Month, United States, 2005**

Month	Whole Fish			Other				Fillets ²	Total Sales
	Rnd & Gutted Only	Whole Dressed	Total	Steaks	Nuggets	Other ¹	Total		
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>
Fresh									
Jan	*	*	211	*	117	*	137	513	861
Feb	*	*	170	*	107	*	130	520	820
Mar	*	*	187	*	136	*	153	632	972
Apr	*	*	113	*	84	*	95	368	576
May	*	*	190	*	105	*	124	510	824
Jun	*	*	175	*	94	*	114	495	784
Jul	*	*	146	*	103	*	117	482	745
Aug	*	*	169	*	133	*	144	423	736
Sep	*	*	139	*	98	*	105	463	707
Oct	*	*	192	*	128	*	139	566	897
Nov	*	*	211	*	123	*	131	531	873
Dec	*	*	90	*	86	*	89	372	551
Frozen									
Jan		724	724	73	1,653	966	2,692	10,368	13,784
Feb		800	800	73	1,977	692	2,742	8,911	12,453
Mar		1,213	1,213	97	2,176	940	3,213	8,654	13,080
Apr		1,110	1,110	132	2,026	1,004	3,162	8,139	12,411
May		725	725	133	2,511	888	3,532	7,867	12,124
Jun		736	736	118	2,288	898	3,304	7,784	11,824
Jul		739	739	104	2,351	909	3,364	8,019	12,122
Aug		682	682	109	2,039	992	3,140	8,323	12,145
Sep		567	567	101	1,719	1,004	2,824	8,070	11,461
Oct		538	538	89	1,245	1,014	2,348	7,674	10,560
Nov		637	637	104	1,638	1,006	2,748	8,597	11,982
Dec		831	831	114	1,667	1,202	2,983	9,342	13,156
Fresh & Frozen									
Jan	*	*	935	*	1,770	*	2,829	10,881	14,645
Feb	*	*	970	*	2,084	*	2,872	9,431	13,273
Mar	*	*	1,400	*	2,312	*	3,366	9,286	14,052
Apr	*	*	1,223	*	2,110	*	3,257	8,507	12,987
May	*	*	915	*	2,616	*	3,656	8,377	12,948
Jun	*	*	911	*	2,382	*	3,418	8,279	12,608
Jul	*	*	885	*	2,454	*	3,481	8,501	12,867
Aug	*	*	851	*	2,172	*	3,284	8,746	12,881
Sep	*	*	706	*	1,817	*	2,929	8,533	12,168
Oct	*	*	730	*	1,373	*	2,487	8,240	11,457
Nov	*	*	848	*	1,761	*	2,879	9,128	12,855
Dec	*	*	921	*	1,753	*	3,072	9,714	13,707

* Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

¹ Includes all products not already reported, including weight of breading and added ingredients.

² Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

Catfish Processing Estimates

Survey Procedures: Survey data for catfish processing are collected from approximately 21 processors. All participating processors must meet the minimum criteria of having a capacity to process at least 2,000 pounds live weight of catfish per 8-hour shift. The survey is conducted entirely by NASS Headquarter's staff in Washington, D.C. NASS field offices, however, are responsible for keeping Headquarters informed of any new processing operations in their state to ensure that the survey coverage is as complete as possible. Processors are contacted either by mail or telephone. Diligent effort is made to ensure that all operations are accounted for in the estimate.

Estimation Procedures: The "**Catfish Processing**" report refers strictly to farm-raised fish and excludes wild capture fish. Prior to summarization, questionnaires are compared with the previous month's reports for comparable placement of data, reasonable price levels, and reasonable inventory carryover given the sales and processing totals reported. Estimates are made for those processors whose reports are not available in time to be included in the release. These plants are identified by an asterisk on page 5 of this release. Estimates are normally based on the processor's previous report and current conditions. Published totals are a straight summation of the individual reports and estimated data. Price items are weighted by the associated volumes to compute weighted average prices. The published price for total whole fish, however, reflects an adjustment to the round and gutted only price to bring it to an equivalent dressed weight price.

If a plant uses a fiscal accounting system, proration is used to convert reported data to a calendar month basis. Only national level estimates are published due to the limited number of plants involved. Generally, individual items are not published if there are less than three plants reporting, or if any one plant has 60 percent or more of the total.

One unique feature of the "**Catfish Processing**" report is the listing of cooperating processors by name on each month's release. This feature originally was used to solicit industry cooperation in maintaining coverage, but it has continued because of the processors' overall acceptance of this policy.

Import and export data for frozen catfish fillets, which are compiled by the Department of Commerce, are also included in this report.

Reliability: Catfish processing estimates are based on a census of all known active processors and, therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing of the data. These errors are minimized through strict quality controls in the edit and summarization process, and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

Revision Policy: Revisions may be necessary following a review of late reports received from plants. Revisions of less than 2 percent of the existing published levels of any category will normally not be made.